

BEN LEERS: My name is Ben Leers, I'm with Sierra Club Ohio. I'm going to be short and sweet. Personal story as well. I'm from Las Vegas, Nevada and my parents live in Utah. So living in the west I spent a lot of time in the national parks. It's where I have found my spirituality and a lot of valuable time as a kid. So seeing the national parks, it's one of the most well-protected pieces of land that I've ever seen. So I moved out east for school about three years ago, and I was introduced to an entirely new type of view and nature. But it's not as well protected as demonstrated by the federal coal leasing program. Giving the land out and letting them destroy it. In the national parks it's vandalism and it's a federal misdemeanor and penalized by up to six months in prison and a fine up to \$500. Meanwhile, the federal leasing program of coal, we are giving this land to corporations and allowing them to destroy this property which belongs to everybody here. So like you guys mentioned, 20 years in, we still have leases that are going to be in effect and this destruction is going to occur for 20 years going on into the future. So I want to reiterate the words of a couple of people that have spoken that it is necessary that federal land leases for coal needs to be stopped, but not only that but begin to impose recommendations to phase out the federal leasing of land for coal all together. You guys have been presented with the statistics and you know the drastic effects that it has. So I think this is a lot larger of a problem than money and the economy. Our entire future and environment is at stake. Thank you.